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Readings Booklet

January 2002



English 30

Part B: Reading

Grade 12 Diploma Examination

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January 2002
English 30
Part B: Reading
Readings Booklet
Grade 12 Diploma Examination

Description

Part B: Reading contributes 50% of the total English 30 Diploma Examination mark.

There are 8 reading selections in the Readings Booklet and 70 questions in the Questions Booklet.

Time: 2 hours. This examination was developed to be completed in 2 hours; however, you may take an additional ½ hour to complete the examination.

Plan your time carefully.

Instructions

- Be sure that you have an English 30 Readings Booklet **and** an English 30 Questions Booklet.
- You may **not** use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other reference materials.



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I. Questions 1 to 6 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

INFINITE BEASTS

From time to time I watch you closely, with new eyes,
appreciating how much of you I haven't seen

4 and I'm no longer sure whether it's what I know of you
that attracts me, or what I might find.

When we met, I thought knowledge had limits, that in love
we were finite beasts who shared known boundaries

8 but watching you touch objects for which I have no desire
I see a measure of longing in your eyes

that forces me to say, I don't know you yet. That forces me
to say, there are places in you I may not wish to know.

12 In love we are beasts of infinity, crude in our longing
for things that may carry us apart. It's more than biology

or romance, more than drawing thorns from feet
with gentled fangs, more than all we have been told;

16 it's finding a reason to come together
without killing the wildness we each carry

like a gift we haven't decided to share
and hold inside ourselves with only the edges showing.

Rhona McAdam (1957–)

Born in Duncan, B.C., Rhona McAdam
lived for 12 years in Alberta and now resides in
London, England. Her books include
Hour of the Pearl and *Old Habits*.

II. Questions 7 to 18 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a story.

The story is set in Montreal in the 1950s.

Mme. Carette is a widow with two daughters in their early twenties, Berthe and Marie. Berthe is an office worker and Marie is unemployed. The Carette family considers Marie's current boyfriend unacceptable, and Uncle Gildas has recruited Louis instead.

At the beginning of this excerpt, 26-year-old Louis nervously approaches the Carette home on his first visit, checking the address he has written on a slip of paper. Mme. Carette watches in anticipation from the front window.

from THE CHOSEN HUSBAND

Peering at their front door, he walked into a puddle of slush. Mme. Carette wondered if Marie's children were going to be nearsighted. "How can we be sure he's the right man?" she said.

"Who else could he be?" Berthe replied. What did he want with Marie?

- 5 Uncle Gildas could not have promised much in her name, apart from a pliant nature. There could never be a meeting in a notary's office to discuss a dowry, unless you counted some plates and furniture. The old man may have frightened Louis, reminded him that prolonged celibacy—except among the clergy—is displeasing to God. Marie is poor, he must have said, though honorably
10 connected. She will feel grateful to you all her life.

- Their front steps were painted pearl-gray, to match the building stone. Louis's face, upturned, was the color of wood ash. Climbing the stair, ringing the front doorbell could change his life in a way he did not wholly desire. Probably he wanted a woman without sin or risk or coaxing or remorse; but did he want her
15 enough to warrant setting up a household? A man with a memory as transient as his, who could read an address thirty times and still let it drift, might forget to come to the wedding. He crumpled the slip of paper, pushed it inside a tweed pocket, withdrew a large handkerchief, blew his nose.

- Mme. Carette swayed back from the curtain as though a stone had been
20 flung. She concluded some private thought by addressing Marie: "... although I will feel better on my deathbed if I know you are in your own home." Louis meanwhile kicked the bottom step, getting rid of snow stuck to his shoes. (Rustics kicked and stamped. Marie's Greek¹ had wiped his feet.) Still he hesitated, sliding a last pale look in the direction of buses and streetcars. Then, as

Continued

¹Marie's Greek—Marie's current boyfriend

25 he might have turned a gun on himself, he climbed five steps and pressed his finger to the bell.

"Somebody has to let him in," said Mme. Carette.

"Marie," said Berthe.

"It wouldn't seem right. She's never met him."

30 He stood quite near, where the top step broadened to a small platform level with the window. They could have leaned out, introduced him to Marie. Marie at this moment seemed to think he would do; at least, she showed no sign of distaste, such as pushing out her lower lip or crumpling her chin. Perhaps she had been getting ready to drop her Greek: Mme. Carette had warned her that she would
35 have to be a servant to his mother, and eat peculiar food. "He's never asked me to," said Marie, and that was part of the trouble. He hadn't asked anything. For her twenty-first birthday he had given her a locket on a chain and a box from Maitland's, the West End confectioner, containing twenty-one chocolate mice. "He loves me," said Marie. She kept counting the mice and would not let anyone
40 eat them.

In the end it was Berthe who admitted Louis, accepted the gift of chocolates on behalf of Marie, showed him where to leave his hat and coat. She approved of the clean white shirt, the jacket of a tweed similar to the coat but lighter in weight, the tie with a pattern of storm-tossed sailboats. Before shaking hands he removed
45 his glasses, which had misted over, and wiped them dry. His eyes meeting the bright evening at the window (Marie was still there, but with her back to the street) flashed ultramarine. Mme. Carette hoped Marie's children would inherit that color.

He took Marie's yielding hand and let it drop. Freed of the introduction, she
50 pried open the lid of the candy box and said, distinctly, "No mice." He seemed not to hear, or may have thought she was pleased to see he had not played a practical joke. Berthe showed him to the plush armchair, directly underneath a chandelier studded with light bulbs. From this chair Uncle Gildas had explained the whims of God; against its linen antimacassar² the Greek had recently rested
55 his head.

Around Louis's crêpe soles pools of snow water formed. Berthe glanced at her mother, meaning that she was not to mind; but Mme. Carette was trying to remember where Berthe had said that she and Marie were to sit. (On the sofa, facing Louis.) Berthe chose a gilt upright chair, from which she could rise easily
60 to pass refreshments. These were laid out on a marble-topped console: vanilla wafers, iced sultana cake, maple fudge, marshmallow biscuits, soft drinks. Behind the sofa a large pier glass³ reflected Louis in the armchair and the top of

Continued

²antimacassar—a protective covering for the backs of chairs and sofas

³pier glass—mirror

Mme. Carette's head. Berthe could tell from her mother's posture, head tilted, hands clasped, that she was silently asking Louis to trust her. She leaned forward
65 and asked him if he was an only child. Berthe closed her eyes. When she opened them, nothing had changed except that Marie was eating chocolates. Louis seemed to be reflecting on his status.

He was the oldest of seven, he finally said. The others were Joseph, Raymond, Vincent, Francis, Rose, and Claire. French was their first language, in
70 a way. But, then, so was English. A certain Louis Joseph Raymond Driscoll, Irish, veteran of Waterloo on the decent side, proscribed⁴ in England and Ireland as a result, had come out to Canada and grafted on pure French stock a number of noble traits: bright, wavy hair, a talent for public speaking, another for social aplomb. In every generation of Driscolls, there had to be a Louis, a Joseph, a
75 Raymond. (Berthe and her mother exchanged a look. He wanted three sons.)

His French was slow and muffled, as though strained through wool. He used English words, or French words in an English way. Mme. Carette lifted her shoulders and parted her clasped hands as if to say, Never mind, English is better than Greek. At least, they could be certain that the Driscolls were Catholic. In
80 August his father and mother were making the Holy Year pilgrimage to Rome.

Rome was beyond their imagining, though all three Carettes had been to Maine and Old Orchard Beach. Louis hoped to spend a vacation in Old Orchard (in response to an ardent question from Mme. Carette), but he had more feeling for Quebec City. His father's people had entered Canada by way of Quebec.

85 "The French part of the family?" said Mme. Carette.

"Yes, yes," said Berthe, touching her mother's arm.

Berthe had been to Quebec City, said Mme. Carette. She was brilliant, reliable, fully bilingual. Her office promoted her every January. They were always sending her away on company business. She knew Plattsburgh, Saranac
90 Lake. In Quebec City, at lunch at the Château Frontenac, she had seen well-known politicians stuffing down oysters and fresh lobster, at taxpayers' expense.

Louis's glance tried to cross Berthe's, as he might have sought out and welcomed a second man in the room. Berthe reached past Mme. Carette to take the candy box away from Marie. She nudged her mother with her elbow.

95 "The first time I ever saw Old Orchard," Mme. Carette resumed, smoothing the bodice of her dress, "I was sorry I had not gone there on my honeymoon." She paused, watching Louis accept a chocolate. "My husband and I went to Fall River. He had a brother in the lumber business."

At the mention of lumber, Louis took on a set, bulldog look. Berthe
100 wondered if the pulp-and-paper firm had gone bankrupt. Her thoughts rushed to Uncle Gildas—how she would have it out with him, not leave it to her mother, if

Continued

⁴ proscribed—ostracized, denounced, outlawed

he had failed to examine Louis's prospects. But then Louis began to cough and had to cover his mouth. He was in trouble with a caramel. The Carettes looked away, so that he could strangle unobserved. "How dark it is," said Berthe, to let
105 him think he could not be seen. Marie got up, with a hiss and rustle of taffeta skirt, and switched on the twin floor lamps with their cerise silk shades.

There, she seemed to be saying to Berthe. Have I done the right thing? Is this what you wanted?

Louis still coughed, but weakly. He moved his fingers, like a child made to
110 wave goodbye. Mme. Carette wondered how many contagious children's diseases he had survived; in a large family everything made the rounds. His eyes, perhaps seeking shade, moved across the brown wallpaper flecked with gold and stopped at the only familiar sight in the room—his reflection in the pier glass. He sat up straighter and quite definitely swallowed. He took a long drink of ginger ale.
115 "When Irish eyes are smiling," he said, in English, as if to himself. "When Irish eyes are smiling. There's a lot to be said for that. A lot to be said."

Of course he was at a loss, astray in an armchair, with the Carettes watching like friendly judges. When he reached for another chocolate, they looked to see if his nails were clean. When he crossed his legs, they examined his socks. They
120 were fixing their first impression of the stranger who might take Marie away, give her a modern kitchen, children to bring up, a muskrat coat, a charge account at Dupuis Frères department store, a holiday in Maine. Louis continued to examine his bright Driscoll hair, the small nose along which his glasses slid. Holding the glasses in place with a finger, he answered Mme. Carette: His father was a dental
125 surgeon, with a degree from Pennsylvania. It was the only degree worth mentioning. Before settling into a dentist's chair the patient should always read the writing on the wall.⁵ His mother was born Lucarne, a big name in Moncton. She could still get into her wedding dress. Everything was so conveniently arranged at home—cavernous washing machine, giant vacuum cleaner—that she
130 seldom went out. When she did, she wore a two-strand cultured-pearl necklace and a coat and hat of Persian lamb.

The Carettes could not match this, though they were related to families for whom bridges were named. Mme. Carette sat on the edge of the sofa, ankles together. Gentility was the brace that kept her upright. She had once been a
135 young widow, hard pressed, had needed to sew for money. Berthe recalled a stricter, an unsmiling mother, straining over pleats and tucks for clients who reneged on pennies. She wore the neutral shades of half-mourning, the whitish

Continued

⁵the writing on the wall—an allusion to a story in the Bible, now a common expression referring to indications of one's misfortune. In this case, the dentist's certificates of qualification are literally mounted on the wall.

grays of Rue Saint-Hubert, as though everything had to be used up—even remnants of grief.

140 Mme. Carette tried to imagine Louis's mother. She might one day have to sell the pearls; even a dentist trained in Pennsylvania could leave behind disorder and debts. Whatever happened, she said to Louis, she would remain in this flat. Even after the girls were married. She would rather beg on the steps of the parish church than intrude upon a young marriage. When her last, dreadful illness made
145 itself known, she would creep away to the Hôtel Dieu and die without a murmur. On the other hand, the street seemed to be filling up with foreigners. She might have to move.

Berthe and Marie were dressed alike, as if to confound Louis, force him to choose the true princess. Leaving the sight of his face in the mirror, puzzled by
150 death and old age, he took notice of the two moiré skirts, organdie blouses, patent leather belts. "I can't get over these twins of yours," he said to Mme. Carette. "I just can't get over them."

Once, Berthe had tried Marie in her own office—easy work, taking messages when the switchboard was closed. She knew just enough English for
155 that. After two weeks the office manager, Mr. Macfarlane, had said to Berthe, "Your sister is an angel, but angels aren't in demand at Prestige Central Burners."

It was the combination of fair hair and dark eyes, the enchanting misalliance, that gave Marie the look of an angel. She played with the locket the Greek had given her, twisting and unwinding the chain. What did she owe her
160 Greek? Fidelity? An explanation? He was punctual and polite, had never laid a hand on her, in temper or eagerness, had travelled a long way by streetcar to bring back the mice. True, said Berthe, reviewing his good points, while Louis ate the last of the fudge. It was true about the mice, but he should have become more than "Marie's Greek." In the life of a penniless unmarried young woman, there
165 was no room for a man merely in love. He ought to have presented himself as *something*: Marie's future.

Mavis Gallant (1922–)

A Canadian writer who has lived in France for the last 40 years. She has received the Governor General's Award for fiction and is a Companion of the Order of Canada.

III. Questions 19 to 32 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a Shakespearean play.

The scene is set in the English camp in France before the Battle of Agincourt. The youthful KING HENRY V, inspired by suggestions from leaders of the Church in England and convinced of the legality of his claim to France, is preparing to lead his small army of weakened soldiers against a much larger and fresher French army.

from THE LIFE OF KING HENRY THE FIFTH, Act IV, scene iii

CHARACTERS:

KING HENRY V—(Harry) King of England in the 15th century

GLOUCESTER—Duke of Gloucester, brother of the King

BEDFORD—Duke of Bedford, brother of the King

WESTMORELAND—Earl of Westmoreland

EXETER—Duke of Exeter, uncle of the King

SALISBURY—Earl of Salisbury

MONTJOY—French messenger or herald

YORK—Duke of York, cousin of the King

(Enter GLOUCESTER, BEDFORD, EXETER, ERPINGHAM with all his Host, SALISBURY, and WESTMORELAND.)

GLOUCESTER: Where is the king?

BEDFORD: The king himself is rode to view their battle.

5 **WESTMORELAND:** Of fighting men they have full three-score thousand.

EXETER: There's five to one; besides, they all are fresh.

SALISBURY: God's arm strike with us! 'Tis a fearful odds.

God bye you, princes all; I'll to my charge.

If we no more meet till we meet in heaven,

10 Then joyfully, my noble Lord of Bedford,

My dear Lord Gloucester, and my good Lord Exeter,

And my kind kinsman, warriors all, adieu!

BEDFORD: Farewell, good Salisbury, and good luck go with thee!

EXETER: Farewell, kind lord: fight valiantly to-day;

15 And yet I do thee wrong to mind thee of it,

For thou art framed of the firm truth of valor.

(Exit SALISBURY.)

BEDFORD: He is as full of valor as of kindness,
Princely in both.

20 *(Enter the KING.)*

Continued

WESTMORELAND: O that we now had here
 But one ten thousand of those men in England
 That do no work to-day!

KING: What's he that wishes so?

25 My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin.
 If we are marked to die, we are enow
 To do our country loss; and if to live,
 The fewer men, the greater share of honor.
 God's will! I pray thee wish not one man more.

30 By Jove, I am not covetous¹ for gold,
 Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
 It yearns² me not if men my garments wear;
 Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
 But if it be a sin to covet honor,

35 I am the most offending soul alive.
 No, faith, my coz,³ wish not a man from England.
 God's peace! I would not lose so great an honor
 As one man more methinks would share from me
 For the best hope I have. O, do not wish one more!

40 Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
 That he which hath no stomach to this fight,
 Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
 And crowns for convoy put into his purse.
 We would not die in that man's company

45 That fears his fellowship to die with us.
 This day is called the Feast of Crispian.⁴
 He that outlives this day, and comes safe home,
 Will stand a-tiptoe when this day is namèd
 And rouse him at the name of Crispian.

50 He that shall see this day, and live old age,
 Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors
 And say, "To-morrow is Saint Crispian."
 Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
 [And say, "These wounds I had on Crispin's day."]

55 Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,

Continued

¹covetous—envious, longing to possess

²yearns—grieves

³coz—relative

⁴Feast of Crispian—October 25. Named after the brothers Crispianus and Crispinus who were martyred in AD 487 and later declared saints

- But he'll remember, with advantages,
 What feats he did that day. Then shall our names,
 Familiar in his mouth as household words—
 Harry the King, Bedford and Exeter,
 60 Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester—
 Be in their flowing cups freshly rememb' red.
 This story shall the good man teach his son;
 And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by,
 From this day to the ending of the world,
 65 But we in it shall be remembered—
 We few, we happy few, we band of brothers;
 For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
 Shall be my brother. Be he ne'er so vile,⁵
 This day shall gentle his condition;⁶
 70 And gentlemen in England now abed
 Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
 And hold their manhoods cheap whiles any speaks
 That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day.
 (*Enter SALISBURY.*)
 75 **SALISBURY:** My sovereign lord, bestow yourself with speed.
 The French are bravely in their battles set
 And will with all expedience charge on us.
KING: All things are ready, if our minds be so.
WESTMORELAND: Perish the man whose mind is backward now!
 80 **KING:** Thou dost not wish more help from England, coz?
WESTMORELAND: God's will, my liege! would you and I alone,
 Without more help, could fight this royal battle!
KING: Why, now thou hast unwished five thousand men!
 Which likes me better than to wish us one.
 85 You know your places. God be with you all!
 (*Tucket.⁷ Enter MONTJOY.*)
MONTJOY: Once more I come to know of thee, King Harry,
 If for thy ransom thou wilt now compound,
 Before thy most assurèd overthrow;
 90 For certainly thou art so near the gulf
 Thou needs must be englutted.⁸ Besides, in mercy,
 The Constable desires thee thou wilt mind

Continued

⁵vile—low in worth

⁶gentle his condition—to raise him to an aristocratic status

⁷*Tucket*—a sounding of the trumpet

⁸englutted—swallowed

Thy followers of repentance, that their souls
May make a peaceful and a sweet retire
95 From all these fields, where (wretches!) their poor bodies
Must lie and fester.

KING: Who hath sent thee now?

MONTJOY: The Constable of France.

KING: I pray thee bear my former answer back:

100 Bid them achieve me, and then sell my bones.
Good God! why should they mock poor fellows thus?
The man that once did sell the lion's skin
While the beast lived, was killed with hunting him.
[As] many of our bodies shall no doubt
105 Find native graves; upon the which, I trust,
Shall witness live in brass of this day's work;
And those that leave their valiant bones in France,
Dying like men, though buried in your dunghills,
They shall be famed; for there the sun shall greet them
110 And draw their honors reeking⁹ up to heaven,
Leaving their earthly parts to choke your clime,
The smell whereof shall breed a plague in France.
Mark then abounding valor in our English,
That, being dead, like to the bullet's crasing,¹⁰
115 Break out into a second course of mischief,
Killing in relapse of mortality.¹¹
Let me speak proudly. Tell the Constable
We are but warriors for the working day.
Our gayness and our guilt are all besmirched
120 With rainy marching in the painful field.
There's not a piece of feather in our host—
Good argument, I hope, we will not fly—
And time hath worn us into slovenry.
But, by the mass, our hearts are in the trim;
125 And my poor soldiers tell me, yet ere night
They'll be in fresher robes,¹² or they will pluck
The gay new coats o'er the French soldiers' heads
And turn them out of service. If they do this,

Continued

⁹reeking—rising

¹⁰crasing—scrape or scratch

¹¹in relapse of mortality—as the bodies decay

¹²fresher robes—i.e., newly clothed in heaven

130 As, if God please, they shall, my ransom then
Will soon be levied.¹³ Herald, save thou thy labor.
Come thou no more for ransom, gentle herald.
They shall have none, I swear, but these my joints;
Which if they have as I will leave 'em them
Shall yield them little, tell the Constable.

135 MONTJOY: I shall, King Harry. And so fare thee well.

Thou never shalt hear herald any more.

(Exit.)

KING: I fear thou wilt once more come again for a ransom.

(Enter YORK.)

140 YORK: My lord, most humbly on my knee I beg
The leading of the vaward.¹⁴

KING: Take it, brave York. Now, soldiers, march away;
And how thou pleasest, God, dispose the day!

(Exeunt.)

[Postscript: The English won the battle.]

William Shakespeare (1564–1616)

¹³levied—collected

¹⁴vaward—first approach

IV. Questions 33 to 40 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a novella.

The novella is set in England.

Granny owns the home where she lives with her daughter, Aunt Cissie. Also living with them is her son, Arthur, and Arthur's daughters, Yvette and Lucille. Arthur is a rector (minister) in a church. Arthur's wife, who has abandoned the family, is referred to as "She-who-was-Cynthia."

from THE VIRGIN AND THE GIPSY

Granny, who had been in a semi-coma, called a doze, roused herself on the big, soft couch and put her cap¹ straight.

"I don't get much peace for my nap," she said, slowly feeling her thin white hair, to see that it was in order. She had heard vague noises.

5 Aunt Cissie came in, fumbling in a bag for a chocolate.

"I never saw such a mess!" she said. "You'd better clear some of that litter away, Yvette."

"All right," said Yvette. "I will in a minute."

10 "Which means never!" sneered Aunt Cissie, suddenly darting and picking up the scissors.

There was silence for a few moments, and Lucille slowly pushed her hands in her hair, as she read a book.

"You'd better clear away, Yvette," persisted Aunt Cissie.

15 "I will, before tea," replied Yvette, rising once more and pulling the blue dress over her head, flourishing her long, naked arms through the sleeveless armholes. Then she went between the mirrors, to look at herself once more.

As she did so, she sent the second mirror, that she had perched carelessly on the piano, sliding with a rattle to the floor. Luckily it did not break. But everybody started badly.

20 "She's smashed the mirror!" cried Aunt Cissie.

"Smashed a mirror! Which mirror! Who's smashed it?" came Granny's sharp voice.

"I haven't smashed anything," came the calm voice of Yvette. "It's quite all right."

25 "You'd better not perch it up there again," said Lucille.

Yvette, with a little impatient shrug at all the fuss, tried making the mirror stand in another place. She was not successful.

Continued

¹cap—cloth hair covering commonly worn indoors, particularly by older ladies, at the turn of the 20th century

“If one had a fire in one’s own room,” she said crossly, “one needn’t have a lot of people fussing when one wants to sew.”

30 “Which mirror are you moving about?” asked Granny.

“One of our own, that came from the Vicarage,” said Yvette rudely.

“Don’t break it in *this* house, wherever it came from,” said Granny.

There was a sort of family dislike for the furniture that had belonged to She-who-was-Cynthia. It was most of it shoved into the kitchen, and the

35 servants’ bedrooms.

“Oh, *I’m* not superstitious,” said Yvette, “about mirrors or any of that sort of thing.”

“Perhaps you’re not,” said Granny. “People who never take the responsibility for their own actions usually don’t care what happens.”

40 “After all,” said Yvette, “I may say it’s my own looking-glass, even if I did break it.”

“And I say,” said Granny, “that there shall be no mirrors broken in *this* house, if we can help it; no matter who they belong to, or did belong to. Cissie, have I got my cap straight?”

45 Aunt Cissie went over and straightened the old lady. Yvette loudly and irritatingly trilled a tuneless tune.

“And now, Yvette, will you please clear away,” said Aunt Cissie.

“Oh bother!” cried Yvette angrily. “It’s simply *awful* to live with a lot of people who are always nagging and fussing over trifles.”

50 “What people, may I ask?” said Aunt Cissie ominously.

Another row was imminent. Lucille looked up with a queer cast in her eyes. In the two girls, the blood of She-who-was-Cynthia was roused.

“Of course you may ask! You know quite well I mean the people in this beastly house,” said the outrageous Yvette.

55 “At least,” said Granny, “we don’t come of half-depraved stock.”

There was a second’s electric pause. Then Lucille sprang from her low seat, with sparks flying from her.

“You shut up!” she shouted, in a blast full upon the mottled majesty of the old lady.

60 The old woman’s breast began to heave with heaven knows what emotions. The pause this time, as after the thunderbolt, was icy.

Then Aunt Cissie, livid, sprang upon Lucille, pushing her like a fury.

“Go to your room!” she cried hoarsely. “Go to your room!”

And she proceeded to push the white but fiery-eyed Lucille from the room.

65 Lucille let herself be pushed, while Aunt Cissie vociferated:

“Stay in your room till you’ve apologised for this!—till you’ve apologised to the Mater² for this!”

Continued

²Mater—mother

"I shan't apologise!" came the clear voice of Lucille, from the passage, while Aunt Cissie shoved her.

70 Aunt Cissie drove her more wildly upstairs.

Yvette stood tall and bemused in the sitting-room, with the air of offended dignity, at the same time bemused, which was so odd on her. She still was bare-armed, in the half-made blue dress. And even *she* was half-aghast at Lucille's attack on the majesty of age. But also, she was coldly indignant against Granny's aspersion of the maternal blood in their veins.

75 "Of course I meant no offence," said Granny.

"Didn't you!" said Yvette coolly.

"Of course not. I only said we're not depraved, just because we happen to be superstitious about breaking mirrors."

80 Yvette could hardly believe her ears. Had she heard right? Was it possible! Or was Granny, at her age, just telling a barefaced lie?

Yvette knew that the old woman was telling a cool, barefaced lie. But already, so quickly, Granny believed her own statement.

The rector appeared, having left time for a lull.

85 "What's wrong?" he asked cautiously, genially.

"Oh, nothing!" drawled Yvette. "Lucille told Granny to shut up, when she was saying something. And Aunt Cissie drove her up to her room. *Tant de bruit pour une omelette!*³ Though Lucille *was* a bit over the mark, that time."

The old lady couldn't quite catch what Yvette said.

90 "Lucille really will have to learn to control her nerves," said the old woman. "The mirror fell down, and it worried me. I said so to Yvette, and she said something about superstitions and the people in the beastly house. I told her the people in the house were not depraved, if they happened to mind when a mirror was broken. And at that Lucille flew at me and told me to shut up. It really is disgraceful how these children give way to their nerves. I know it's nothing but nerves."

Aunt Cissie had come in during this speech. At first even she was dumb. Then it seemed to her, it was as Granny had said.

100 "I have forbidden her to come down until she comes to apologise to the Mater," she said.

"I doubt if she'll apologise," said the calm, queenly Yvette, holding her bare arms.

"And I don't want any apology," said the old lady. "It is merely nerves. I don't know what they'll come to, if they have nerves like that, at their age! She must take Vibrofat.⁴—I am sure Arthur would like his tea, Cissie!"

Continued

³*Tant de bruit pour une omelette!*—What a lot of noise for an omelette!

⁴Vibrofat—a medicinal tonic

Yvette swept her sewing together, to go upstairs. And again she trilled her tune, rather shrill and tuneless. She was trembling inwardly.

“More glad rags!”⁵ said her father to her, genially.

110 “More glad rags!” she re-iterated sagely, as she sauntered upstairs, with her day dress over one arm. She wanted to console Lucille, and ask her how the blue stuff hung now.

At the first landing, she stood as she nearly always did, to gaze through the window that looked to the road and the bridge. Like the Lady of Shalott,⁶ she seemed always to imagine that someone would come along singing *Tirra-lirra!* or
115 something equally intelligent, by the river.

D.H. Lawrence (1885–1930)

British novelist and poet, one of the most influential and controversial literary figures of the 20th century

⁵glad rags—fancy clothes

⁶Lady of Shalott—subject of a narrative poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. The Lady contentedly experiences life by seeing what is reflected in her mirror, until Sir Lancelot comes into view singing “Tirra-lirra,” by the river. Then, she is no longer content.

V. Questions 41 to 48 in your Questions Booklet are based on this adaptation of a lecture.

THE CANON¹ AND THE WISDOM OF THE EAST

Not long ago I was sitting in the lobby of the Asoka Hotel in New Delhi, discussing with my hosts, in the spirit of philosophical small talk in India, the evidence for levitation.² It was lunchtime, and the lobby was filled with the bright and busy personalities one expects to find in such spaces, waiting for whomever they had made dates with. At one point the elevator opened and a Sikh came out with a book balanced on his head. He was flanked by four other Sikh men and some women in brilliant saris. An especially tall . . . Sikh swatted the air over the book with a kind of whisk, as if to keep insects from alighting. The company swept out of the elevator and through the lobby, and not a head was turned. I, on the other hand, was amazed. “Good heavens,” I remember saying to my Indian colleague, Professor Chattopadhyaya, “what was *that*?” Chattopadhyaya, a suave and urbane man, seemed surprised at my surprise. “Oh, just the *Granth Sahib*,”³ he told me. “Somebody sent for it no doubt.” He was anxious to return to the anecdotal basis for belief in levitation, but I told him that I would find somebody levitating in the lobby of the Asoka Hotel measurably less astounding than the knot of book bearers that had appeared like a vision in the lobby of that elegant building.

This experience comes to mind whenever I’m asked about the canon and whether college humanities courses should be expanded to include non-Western literature. I have great difficulty responding to that question because I really do not know what my relationship is to such books, or what it means to read them—or even to what degree the physical reality of a sacred text such as the *Granth Sahib* is connected to its contents.

I have read that the Guru Angad, the “author” of this work (to the degree that even the concept of authorship can be taken for granted), invented a special script, a variation on the traditional Sharada⁴ alphabet, in order to convey the sacred character of the text. What becomes of that sacred character, I wonder, when the book is translated into English, arranged in columns of type, and then carted off by students in Velcro-fastened jackets, along with a stack of other oriental

Continued

¹The Canon—those literary works that have met a high standard of acceptance in academic circles

²levitation—rising and remaining in the air without physical support

³*Granth Sahib*—sacred Sikh scriptures

⁴Sharada—centuries-old Kashmiri script, now used chiefly for religious writings

30 classics, a couple of Grateful Dead cassettes, a filofax, and a pack of Doublemint gum?

Many of these books were intended to be the only book one had to know in order to live one's life. These sacred texts were distant Himalayas of knowledge—their intuitions glacial, their perspectives sweeping—in which the world was
35 revealed in its true proportion, as were the readers themselves. Though these books imparted knowledge for living one's life, the living of that life, paradoxically, was a prerequisite to understanding how to read the book. What remains, then, of these books' true identities when they are brought into our classrooms and praised for their "literary value"?

40 Let me offer a comparison. I have lately been interested in the issue of how primitive art, as it is called, should be looked at. Beyond question, these objects stand up artistically, once we remove the criterion of naturalistic representation from our judgment. We consider them aesthetically worthy of exhibition in our institutions, and so place them in an artistic tradition defined by visual excellence.
45 But if we examine these works within their *own* cultures, they offer other dimensions—the magical and spiritual, to mention only two examples—that are far more important than being pleasing to the eye or exhibiting formal excellence. These dimensions are lost, however, when a museum attempts to universalize art. Inadvertently, the museum blinds us to nonvisual artistic traditions, ones in which
50 art does not exist for the reasons it may exist among us.

A similar problem arises when we talk about "opening the canon," a concept that approaches the world's literature, as the museum approaches the world's art, as if it were all of a piece, a repository of universal value. Indeed, we may have an even harder time preserving a book's cultural context than we do with a work of
55 art, since the very way books look—the uniform appearance of words on a page—can imply similarities among Great Books where in fact there may be none.

This creates a dilemma: We want to have access to non-Western books at the university and elsewhere, but the price of that access may be that we make these books, in their own terms, *inaccessible*. By reading these texts on assignment and
60 then sitting in a classroom discussing them, we actually move further from understanding their meaning. In Muslim culture, for example, the Koran⁵ is read repeatedly, it is memorized, it is recited through the night, but it is never "discussed" the way it is in the university classroom, as a "great book" or an important one. Our attempt to treat non-Western works simply as voices in one
65 great multicultural discussion may reveal as much about our own premises as treating them as the Wisdom of the East revealed about the premises of Victorian

Continued

⁵Koran—sacred book of Islam

culture—a culture convinced that drops of moral medicine, curative and restorative, could be distilled from these odd texts. . . .

70 The difficulty with our approach to non-Western literature is that it fails to adequately address the issue of these texts' Otherness. I am not arguing for relativism of any sort. But in non-Western cultures there are values other than truth and ways of addressing books other than by analyzing their content. For texts are things that have to be lived, as many books of the Orient are lived—their vitality as writing bound up with their being vitally a part of the lives of their
75 readers in a way that they cannot be with ours.

Arthur Danto (1924–)
Art critic and professor of Philosophy at
Columbia University, New York City

VI. Questions 49 to 57 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from a play.

In this excerpt, CONSTANCE believes she is studying the original source for two of Shakespeare's tragedies: Othello and Romeo and Juliet.

Desdemona from Othello and Juliet from Romeo and Juliet both suffer tragic consequences because of love. Desdemona marries Othello against her father's wishes. Othello's wedding present to Desdemona, an embroidered handkerchief she promised never to part with, is presented as proof that she has been unfaithful to Othello. As a consequence, Othello kills Desdemona in a jealous rage.

Juliet's love for Romeo is forbidden because he is a member of a rival feuding family. In spite of this, they marry in secret. Shortly afterward, Romeo is exiled and Juliet is told by her father that she must marry Paris, a young count. To avoid marriage to Paris, Juliet drinks a potion that imitates death. Romeo discovers Juliet in her family tomb and, believing that she is dead, kills himself. Juliet awakens, finds Romeo dead and kills herself.

This scene begins with CONSTANCE alone, speaking aloud. She is wearing a toque that she has forgotten to take off. She hopes that she will shortly receive a full professorship.

from GOODNIGHT DESDEMONA (GOOD MORNING JULIET), Act I, scene i

CHARACTERS:

CONSTANCE LEDBELL—an assistant professor at Queen's University, Kingston,
Ontario

PROFESSOR CLAUDE NIGHT—a professor at Queen's University, and boss to
Constance

- 5 **CONSTANCE:** What if a Fool were to enter the worlds of both *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*? Would he be akin to the Wise Fool in *King Lear*?: a Fool who can comfort and comment, but who cannot alter the fate of the tragic hero. Or would our Fool defuse the tragedies by assuming centre stage as comic hero? Indeed, in *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* the Fool is conspicuous by his very absence, for these two tragedies turn on flimsy mistakes—a lost hanky, a delayed wedding announcement—mistakes too easily concocted and corrected by a Wise Fool. I will go further: are these mistakes, in fact, the footprints of

Continued

10 a missing Fool?; a Wise Fool whom Shakespeare eliminated from two earlier comedies by an unknown author?! *Non obstante*;¹ although a Fool might stem the blundering of Othello and Romeo, the question remains, would he prove a match . . . (*She pops the cigarette butt between her lips and hunts for a match*) for Desdemona and Juliet? Or are these excellent heroines fated to remain tragedies looking for a place to happen? (*Having failed to find a*
 15 *match, she tosses the cigarette butt into the wastebasket, then opens the ancient Manuscript. It is the same length and width as foolscap. She becomes momentarily absorbed in it, trying to decipher it, turning it every which way*) Nevertheless. I postulate that the Gustav Manuscript, when finally decoded, will prove the prior existence of two comedies by an
 20 unknown author; comedies that Shakespeare plundered and made over into ersatz² tragedies! It is an irresistible—if wholly repugnant—thought. (*The office door begins to open silently. Oblivious, CONSTANCE resumes her soft tuneless singing. She takes up her fountain pen once more but discovers it is out of ink. She bends down to her bookbag on the floor to look for a refill*
 25 *and does not see PROFESSOR CLAUDE NIGHT enter on tiptoe. He is about the same age as Constance, is perfectly groomed and brogued,³ speaks with an Oxford accent, and oozes confidence. He silently perches on her desk. She rises from the depths of her bookbag, sees him, and hits the roof*)
 Ah-h-h!

30 **PROFESSOR:** Heh-heh-heh, got you again Connie.
CONSTANCE: Heh. Oh Professor Night, you scared the daylights out of me.
PROFESSOR: You must learn to relax, my little titmouse.⁴ You're working too hard. Speaking of which . . . have you got something for me? (*CONSTANCE stares at him for a moment too long before answering*)

35 **CONSTANCE:** Yes. It's here somewhere.
(She begins rummaging. PROFESSOR picks up her green-ink thesis. He shakes his head. CONSTANCE surfaces from her desk with a thick essay, also handwritten in green ink on foolscap. She sees that he is reading her thesis. She shoots out her hand involuntarily and snatches it from him)

40 Don't read that! . . . sir . . . the ink's not dry.
(She stuffs her thesis into a drawer of her desk. He wipes his green ink-stained fingers on his handkerchief)

PROFESSOR: Still harping on the Gustav Manuscript are you? I hate to see you turning into a laughing stock Connie. You know you'll never get your

Continued

¹*Non obstante*—notwithstanding (any statute to the contrary)

²ersatz—inferior or artificial imitations

³brogued—shod; a brogue is a leather shoe usually with ornamental perforations and wing tips

⁴titmouse—any of numerous small insect-eating birds such as the chickadee

45 doctorate at this rate.
CONSTANCE: I know . . . I guess I just have a thing for lost causes.
PROFESSOR: You're an incurable romantic Connie.
CONSTANCE: Just a failed existentialist.
PROFESSOR: Traipsing after the Holy Grail,⁵ or the Golden Fleece⁶ or some
50 such figment.
CONSTANCE: Whoever cracks the Gustav code will be right up there with
 Darwin, Bingham—
PROFESSOR: And Don Quixote.⁷ The best tenured minds in the world have
 sought to translate it for the past three hundred years. What gives you the
55 notion you're special?
CONSTANCE: Oh I'm not, I'm, I'm not the least bit special, I'm, I'm just one
 flawed and isolated fragment of a perfect infinite mind like anybody else,
 I—I think that I exist in that you and I are here chatting with the sense
 evidence of each other, insofar as we're not over there not chatting, no I'm
60 not special—unique maybe, in the, in the sense that a snowflake is unique,
 but no more valuable than any other flake . . . It's just that I, I did win the
 Dead Languages Prize as an undergraduate, and it would be a shame to hide
 my light under a bushel.⁸
PROFESSOR (*Concealing his curiosity*): Say you did crack these obscure
65 alchemical hieroglyphs; what if they turned out to be a grocery list or some
 such rubbish?
CONSTANCE: I think it's source material that Shakespeare wanted to suppress
 yet preserve.
PROFESSOR: And I suppose you've feverishly identified a whole raft of
70 anagrams to support this heresy?
CONSTANCE: As a matter of fact, yes. If you take the second letter of the
 eighteenth word of every second scene in *Othello*, and cross reference them
 with the corresponding letters in *Romeo and Juliet*, it says: "I dare not
 name the source of this txt."
75 **PROFESSOR:** "txt"?
CONSTANCE: Well, "text." I'm missing the letter, "e," it was probably deleted
 in a later printing.

Continued

⁵Holy Grail—according to medieval legend, it was a cup used by Jesus at the Last Supper and later became the object of many chivalrous quests

⁶Golden Fleece—in Greek mythology, the fleece of the golden ram stolen by Jason, leader of the Argonauts, who were sailors in search of gold

⁷Don Quixote—an impractical idealist, from a book of the same name, who was bent on putting right incorrigible wrongs

[The Holy Grail, the search for the Golden Fleece, and Don Quixote are related in that they all involve idealistic quests.]

⁸bushel—a basket

PROFESSOR: Your fascination with mystery borders on the vulgar,⁹ I'm afraid.

80 CONSTANCE: I can't help it. I'm a fallen Catholic. It's left me with a streak of
 "whodunit."

PROFESSOR: Well who did dun it? What became of this mysterious source
 material?

CONSTANCE: I think Shakespeare gave it to his elderly friend, Gustav the
 alchemist, to shroud in an arcane code, and that's what's in here.

85 PROFESSOR (*Amused*): Oh Connie. You have such an interesting little mind.

CONSTANCE: Thank you sir.

PROFESSOR: Hand it over.
 (*CONSTANCE thinks he is referring to the Manuscript*)
 No, ye gods forfend, not that decrepit tome. The—ahem—your latest
 90 commission.

CONSTANCE: Oh, the essay. Here you go. I hope I've destroyed Professor
 Hollowfern's book to your satisfaction.

PROFESSOR: I'm sure it's up to your customarily dizzying standard. Did you
 remember to give yourself the usual thanks for "irksome proofing of the
 95 text"?

CONSTANCE (*Beet red*): In point of fact sir, I took the liberty of dedicating it
 to myself.

PROFESSOR: That's awfully sweet of you Connie. (*Looks at essay*) Tsk tsk tsk
 your hand gets more cryptic all the time. Like the tracks of some tiny green
 100 creature. I do wish you'd learn to type, my dear. I'm weary of doing my
 own typing, and I daren't trust anyone else with our little secret.

CONSTANCE: I'm working on it sir, but my fine motor skills are really poor.

PROFESSOR (*Still scanning the essay*): Indeed.

CONSTANCE: I'm ready for my next assignment Professor. I've sharpened my
 105 nib to a killing point.
 (*They share a malicious chuckle*)

PROFESSOR: And dipped it in venom to paralyze the academic foe with one
 poisonous phrase?
 (*More chuckling*)

110 CONSTANCE: Just name your victim.

PROFESSOR: Connie. There remains but one thing you can do for me.

CONSTANCE: Oh? . . . What's that?
 (*He takes a small velvet box from his pocket, opens it, and shows her*)

PROFESSOR: Tell me . . . do you like it?

115 CONSTANCE: Oh Professor Night—

PROFESSOR: Claude.

Continued

⁹vulgar—deficient in taste or refinement

CONSTANCE: Oh Claude . . . it's the most beautiful diamond I've ever seen.
 PROFESSOR: Dear Connie. Thank you. I'm the happiest man in the world.
 CONSTANCE: So am I. I can't quite believe it!
 120 PROFESSOR: Neither will Ramona.
 CONSTANCE: Ramona? . . . Oh.
 PROFESSOR: I'm going to miss you Connie.
 CONSTANCE: Am I going somewhere?
 PROFESSOR: I am, pet. I've decided to take that lecturing post at Oxford
 125 myself. Even if it does fall somewhat short of a challenge.
 CONSTANCE: Oh. I thought you might recommend someone less distinguished,
 say an Assistant Professor, for that job.
 PROFESSOR: That's what I thought too until Ramona won the Rhodes.¹⁰ Now
 it's Oxford for the both of us, eh what?
 130 CONSTANCE: What about—Will I still work for you?
 PROFESSOR: I'm afraid not love. I made full Professor today, so the
 pressure's off.
 CONSTANCE: Congratulations.
 PROFESSOR: Not to worry. I've lined up a lovely post for you in Regina.
 135 CONSTANCE: Thanks.
 PROFESSOR: What's your schedule like day after tomorrow? I hoped you'd help
 pack my books.
 CONSTANCE: I'd love to but . . . that's my birthday . . . and I planned on going to
 the zoo.
 140 PROFESSOR: Birthday eh? Chalk up another one for the Grim Reaper. Still
 twenty-nine and holding are we? Well, many happy re-runs. (Chuckle)
 I've got to dash. I'm addressing the Literary Society this evening—which
 reminds me!
 (But CONSTANCE has anticipated him, and hands him another sheaf of inky
 145 green foolscap)
 CONSTANCE: Here's your speech.
 PROFESSOR: Thanks old girl.
 (He tugs the pom-pom on her toque then exits with:)
 Oxford ho!
 150 (CONSTANCE slowly pulls off her toque and drops it into the wastebasket.
 She is in shock. This is the nadir¹¹ of her passage on this earth)
 CONSTANCE: Regina. I hate the prairies. They're flat. It's an absolute
 nightmare landscape of absolutes and I'm a relativist, I'll go mad.

Ann-Marie MacDonald (1959–)

MacDonald is an award-winning Canadian actor, playwright, and novelist
 who won the Governor General's Award for Drama in 1990 for this play.

¹⁰Rhodes—Rhodes scholarship awarded for study at Oxford University

¹¹nadir—lowest point

VII. Questions 58 to 64 in your Questions Booklet are based on this poem.

AN OLD MAN'S WINTER NIGHT

- All out-of-doors looked darkly in at him
Through the thin frost, almost in separate stars,
That gathers on the pane in empty rooms.
What kept his eyes from giving back the gaze
5 Was the lamp tilted near them in his hand.
What kept him from remembering what it was
That brought him to that creaking room was age.
He stood with barrels round him — At a loss.
And having scared the cellar under him
10 In clomping here, he scared it once again
In clomping off; — and scared the outer night,
Which has its sounds, familiar, like the roar
Of trees and crack of branches, common things,
But nothing so like beating on a box.
15 A light he was to no one but himself
Where now he sat, concerned with he knew what,
A quiet light, and then not even that.
He consigned to the moon, such as she was,
So late-arising, to the broken moon
20 As better than the sun in any case
For such a charge, his snow upon the roof,
His icicles along the wall to keep;
And slept. The log that shifted with a jolt
Once in the stove, disturbed him and he shifted,
25 And eased his heaving breathing, but still slept.
One aged man — one man — can't keep a house,
A farm, a countryside, or if he can,
It's thus he does it of a winter night.

Robert Frost (1874–1963)

An accomplished American poet whose
numerous honours include four Pulitzer Prizes

VIII. Questions 65 to 70 in your Questions Booklet are based on this excerpt from an essay.

from GREAT ROMANTIC RUINS OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Of course, one must view a ruin entirely alone in order to feel a sense of communion with the past, and this may indicate that one needs a melancholy temperament to appreciate ruins fully. Nothing dispels the lingering sanctity of an ancient temple or abbey so instantly as a coachload of tourists clicking their
5 cameras and reading the guide-book aloud. Alone among the crumbling stones, one can listen to the whispering walls and share the silence with the ghosts. So serious ruin-seekers should stay at home at weekends and bank holidays.¹ It seems to me a sorry thing that there is no collective name for the connoisseur of ruins. “Dilettante” will not do, for we are not necessarily connoisseurs of art or
10 architecture—it is the sense of the past that appeals to us, not the pointing of the brick-work. Perhaps “olethrophile” is the word, from the Greek “olethros” for ruins or destruction.

There may be nothing in England to match the overwhelming sense of awe felt at the beauty of the Acropolis,² the fantastic mountain site of Macchu Picchu,³ or
15 the jungle-gripped ruins of Angkor Wat.⁴ But what there is is closer to the people not only in the obvious physical and cultural senses, but in its ability to evoke responses from the collective unconscious. You can flavour ruins to your own taste, and hopefully gain wisdom from them. Their appeal is by no means an entirely negative one, and in this fact lies the importance of preserving what is left.

If I were asked to say in a word what positive lesson we should learn from looking at these crippled monuments to our violent and stumbling progress towards what we are pleased to call civilization, I would answer, “Tolerance.” For how absurd in retrospect seem the greed, petty quarrels and ambitions which
20 have caused these fine buildings to topple and crumble into dust. Ruins evoke in us a cosmic philosophy, a paradoxical sense of mortality and eternal values.

They also present a tantalizing glimpse of something we recognize as a source of uplift and enrichment. We are always entranced but never satisfied. A ruin is like an unfinished symphony or novel, or alternatively, something which is frozen in the very process of dissolving. We yearn for whatever else there was, or
30 should have been, but we know that only our imaginations can supply it. A ruin feeds our dreams, and is a challenge to our senses, creating within us a tension

Continued

¹bank holidays—statutory holidays

²Acropolis—in Greece, the site of the Parthenon, which is an ancient marble temple

³Macchu Picchu—ruins of an ancient city in Peru

⁴Angkor Wat—ruins of an ancient city in Cambodia

between what we see and what we know. And in an age when we are all threatened with a more complete destruction than any of us can truly comprehend, these echoes of the past remind us of the need to learn from what has been and to strive for survival. “One sees the storm,” wrote the German dramatist Gotthold Lessing, “in the wreckage and corpses it has cast upon the shore.”

Whatever our individual reactions to the ruins we see, whether the overriding emotion is one of anger or sadness, admiration or excitement, we should defy the destructive inclinations of our time and ensure that these treasures are preserved, for they are more than our heritage, they are a link in our lifeline.

Brian Bailey
An American writer
of travel guidebooks

Credits

Rhona McAdam. "Infinite Beasts" from *Hour of the Pearl* (Thistledown Press Ltd., 1987). Reprinted under the Alberta Government Print Licence with CANCOPY (Canadian Copyright Licensing Agency).

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